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## Letters To the Editor

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# Letter...

## Letter from New Zealand

Whatever happened to the population explosion? According to the Population Bomb hysterics of 1970 the disaster should already have hit us. But this country, which only 10 years ago had one of the highest growth rates in the world (2½ percent p.a.), has already passed through Zero Population Growth and is now in Negative Population Growth which, to simple citizens like you and me, means simply shrinking.

The contraception-sterilization-abortion triad has knocked the birth rate for six (a cricketing metaphor, of course) and to this must now be added an unprecedented factor in our demographic history — migration loss. Last year a record 25,000 left the country permanently. This would be equivalent to 1.5 million Americans leaving the U.S.

The ZPG experts concentrate only on birth rates and gross population figures, and ignore migration effects, the age distribution of the population and — dare I say it — its quality. New Zealand, like the U.S.A., has been built up by immigration but, as a general rule, immigrants in the first generation tend to be unskilled and limited in their productivity. Emigrants, on the other hand, are skilled, young, energetic and ambitious.

Why are so many leaving this beautiful and favored country? Fr. Arthur

McCormack (*Linacre Quarterly*, Aug., 1978) and other ZPG melancholics notwithstanding, there is one incontrovertible demographic principle — there can be no escape from growth. A society which is alive is growing and youthful. If it does not show signs of growth it is dying. There is no steady state in between. Thanks to anti-natalist physicians and naive acceptance of ZPG propaganda, the country presents a dying air.

The other factor driving the young overseas is an economic one. It has become unhappily obvious that a corollary of ZPG is zero economic growth. People are not simply mouths to feed; they are also hands to work with, brains to produce ideas and consumers to keep the factories going.

The crushing burden of social welfare and bureaucracy has increased to absurd levels. We may not like to admit it but New Zealand, like Britain and Australia, is almost a socialist state. This means high taxation, inflation and destruction of personal savings.

To end on optimistic notes — the number of seminarians seems at last to be increasing. And air fares across the Pacific are tumbling. All American immigrants welcome. Go further west, young man!

— H. P. Dunn, M.D.